

THE HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY



DOUGLAS ADAMS, Author (1952-2001)

Where did *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* really begin? Was it in 1971, when a young student Douglas Adams dreamed up the title, lying drunk one night, staring up at the stars, from a field in Innsbruck, Austria? Was its conception during the February 1977 meeting with BBC Radio Producer Simon Brett, when Douglas first pitched his idea? The earliest scripts resulted from "six months of baths and peanut butter sandwiches," at his mother's house in Dorset, the material percolating through his fertile mind, as he pounded the streets of Stalbridge on his early morning runs. It was a difficult labour; hammered from the keys of an ancient typewriter, music blaring from a record player, the same LPs repeating endlessly. The family only saw him at meal times, but they knew something important was happening...

The public got their first ever jolt of *The Hitchhiker's Guide* on BBC Radio 4, late at night on 08 March 1978. The world tilted – a phenomenon was unleashed. The ground-breaking first series was repeated twice that year due to popular demand, with a Special at Christmas.

Nick Webb, a quick-witted editor at Pan Books noticed the quality of the writing and beat several other publishers to secure the first book deal, beginning a lifelong friendship with Douglas Adams and ultimately becoming his Official Biographer. Stage adaptations, vinyl albums and more radio episodes followed in quick succession, before Douglas bowed to the inevitable. He always declared that the pictures worked better on radio, but nonetheless in 1979 he drafted the first TV script, bursting with visual ideas. The Head of BBC Light Entertainment knew just the producer for the job...



Douglas at the beach location
Credit: David Learner



Douglas with HH Script
Credit: David Beasley

THE CAST



ARTHUR DENT (SIMON JONES)



FORD PREFECT (DAVID DIXON)



ZAPHOD BEEBLEBROX (MARK WING-DAVEY)



TRILLIAN (SANDRA DICKINSON)



MARVIN THE PARANOID ANDROID - (DAVID LEARNER)

VOICE ARTISTS



VOICE OF THE BOOK (PETER JONES)



VOICE OF MARVIN (STEPHEN MOORE)



VOICE OF EDDIE, THE COMPUTER (DAVID TATE)



The TV series cast line-up drew heavily from the original series (except on radio, Susan Sheridan had played Trillian and Geoffrey McGivern had played Ford).

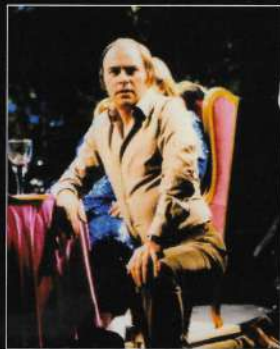
HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY Production Office



ALAN BELL...MIKE CAGER·CLIFF PINNOCK·VICKY PUGH

This art was made for the office door at TV Centre, but kept having to be replaced due to anonymous "souvenir hunters".

THE PRODUCER & HIS TEAM



Alan J. W. Bell was offered the script after directing two episodes of Michael Palin's *Ripping Yarns* series. Having only heard the Christmas episode of the *Hitchhiker's* radio series, Bell was somewhat confused, and had almost decided to turn down the opportunity, but was encouraged by a chance encounter with an enthusiastic young fan. Running the programme from his office at BBC TV Centre, Alan Bell had a team of three by his side at all times. Mike Cager was Production Unit Manager who doubled as Floor Manager in studio. Vicky Pugh was the Production Secretary and Cliff Pinnock acted as Assistant Floor Manager and Locations Manager. Alan Bell received *The Royal Television Society's Original Programme Award* in 1981 for "technique, style and ideas". Despite this and critical acclaim, Douglas Adams and Alan Bell came from different worlds and so "creative differences" are cited as the root cause of their lack of empathy for each other's perspective on the series ever since. Alan directed the series as well as produced, but BBC rules of the period allowed only the one credit.

Douglas Adams once suggested there should be a credit: "Based on a memo by John Lloyd." His former flatmate, Lloyd had helped Douglas write two episodes of the first radio series, before becoming producer of the hugely successful TV satirical sketch comedy *Not The Nine O'Clock News*. Lloyd was the Executive Producer of the TV *Hitchhiker's Guide*, pretty much in name only - attending meetings and making suggestions. Lloyd went on to produce *Blackadder*, *Spitting Image* and *QI*.



DESIGN

Andrew Howe-Davies was the main production designer. With a long line of comedy and drama credits, he used his experience to achieve a sense of infinity in each setting. Lines of glow-sticks lead off into the darkness of the Vogon ship, small floating tables in the background at Milliways suggest further distance. With an eye to the budget, Andrew's re-use of materials was clever and necessary. The Vogon airlock became the Black ship doorway. Fork-lift truck pallets and elements from Ridley Scott's recent film *Alien* were hired and used multiple times, as the Vogon corridor, or the walls of the B-Ark. Vacuum-formed plastic panels adorned Deep Thought and the computer bay where the cops had our heroes pinned down. The Heart of Gold interior, with its swooping curved metal walls and chunky consoles, was stunning - and took hints from the description in the novel. On Disc 2, in *Don't Panic: Colour Supplement*, Andrew recalls the fun they had on location, filling the bath with bubbles and something more suspect...



The main Designer for the series was Andrew Howe-Davies, seen here with Trillian, recalled that the producer wanted everything to look big - with very large set elements and a sense of scale.



Tom Yardley-Jones shared Andrew Howe-Davies' workload on episodes 4 and 6. Here he is holding models of the sets for the Mouse Dinner and Starbattast's office for the studio sessions of episode 4.

AWARDS – REAL AND IMAGINED



Douglas Adams with a Golden Pan award for the first million copies of his novel.



PRIZES FOR EXTREME CLEVERNESS

The inventor of the Infinite Improbability Drive was presented with the Galactic Institute's Prize for Extreme Cleverness, but much good it did him.

Crew members of *Hitchhiker's Guide* won 3 BAFTA (British Academy Of Film and Television Arts) Craft Awards for excellence in their various fields in 1981.

- Rod Lord, (Animation Director) won a BAFTA for the graphics, which he shared with Doug Burd of BBC Graphics, who sadly had died by the time of the ceremony. The animation also garnered a D&AD (Designers and Art Directors) distinctive yellow pencil award.

- Mike McCarthy (Sound Supervisor) won a BAFTA for the show's amazing sound mixing. Mike said recently that the set-up back then was "pretty basic". He can be seen working with state-of-the-art (for 1980) BBC dubbing facility, on Disc 3 in "The Sound of Sypher".

- Ian Williams (Video Editor) won for his complex editing. This was in the days of huge noisy 'Quad' machines running big spools of 2-inch wide tape, situated far away, down in the bowels of Television Centre, attended by a machine operator. Ian worked closely with Electronics Effects Operators Dave Jervis and Dave Chapman whose use of the Quantel 5001FX generators made them all pioneers of the amazing digital world that was to come.

PanGalactic Gargle Blaster

According to *The Hitchhiker's Guide*, the best drink in existence is the Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster. The effect of which is like having your brain smashed out with a slice of lemon, wrapped round a large gold brick. Invented by Zaphod Beeblebrox, he once declared the wisest remark ever made: "Never drink more than two Pan Galactic Gargle Blasters unless you are a thirty ton elephant with bronchial pneumonia." The story behind this warning has never been revealed.

In the TV pilot episode, the script called for the feel of a glossy TV commercial. The glamorous green space couple toasting with the drink were Andrew Mussel and Cleo Roccos. The tight banded metal hoops they wore were actually made of plastic. BBC internal memos reveal a row between the producer Alan J.W. Bell and the costume department about the costs involved in the making of these two simple-looking outfits. The metallic nature was enhanced by the addition of clanging sound effects when they fell down after a mere sip of the drink. The drink was so toxic it was seen to 'melt' a hole in the surface Cleo lay across.



Gargle Blasters were served at Stand Up For Towel Day on 25 May 2017. This continued a long tradition of colourful inventive recipes of the cocktail being on offer at various live *Hitchhiker's Guide*-themed events. Some were served steaming with dry ice, in test tubes.

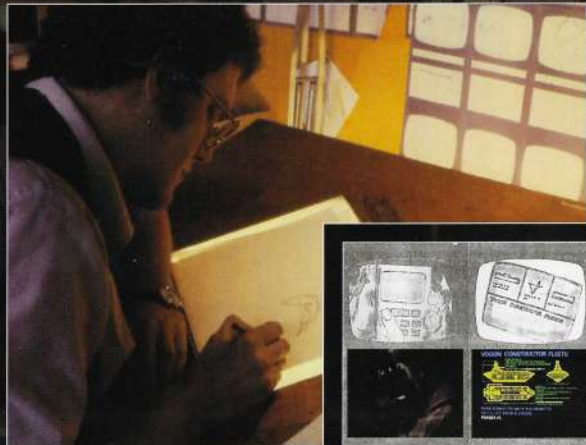
THE ANIMATION COMPANY

Pearce Studios Ltd was an animation company based at Athos House, a building in Hanwell, West London, in a space rented alongside some BBC cutting rooms. MD Rod Lord had honed techniques developed by his father-in-law, Li Pearce, the company founder. Industrial and medical films were their stock-in-trade, with diagram animation a speciality. It was a small business – Rod's artist colleagues John Percy, Dave Hall, and Betty Day, were backed up by a secretary, Pat Smith, and a new young recruit Kevin Davies (the Hitchhiker fan who introduced Alan Bell).

This was nearly 4 decades ago, in a world *before* digital graphics, but Douglas Adams' pilot script demanded *computer* imagery. There were very few actual examples around then, but people had *notions* about what to expect from computers. Doug Burd of BBC Graphics was assigned to liaise and supervise the work done at Pearce Studios. Seeing Rod's first Babel Fish sketch, he suggested a more squared-off look, as he believed computers wouldn't really be able to handle curves. A meeting at the studio in March 1980 with Douglas Adams saw the first half of the Babel Fish sequence approved, and from that point onwards, Burd and Bell pretty much left Lord and his team to get on with it.



(Fish pencil sketch) Rod's original Babel Fish was too rounded for computers, according to Doug Burd.



Rod Lord, sketching the dolphins in pencil.

THE SERIES' ANIMATION

Each drawing began as pencil sketches on paper, then traced onto clear acetate cels in black ink. The lettering was black 'Letraset' on the cels. Through a darkroom process, all this artwork was photographed into negative 'liths', becoming clear lines or lettering on black. Coloured gels, as used on spotlights, were cut out and placed behind the 'liths' under camera, resulting in that glowing 'neon' look. Small bits of black card were animated, frame by frame, to uncover the images and the text. Painstaking work over some very long days and nights, by animation director Rod Lord.

The animation proved a series highlight. Even the experts were fooled into thinking this was some kind of computer graphics. *Datalink* magazine rang the studio and were terribly disappointed to hear the truth. Their phone number then became part of a date-stamp in the Belcerebons sequence.

Rod Lord sells digital copies of his artwork via his website: www.rodlord.com. We have him to thank for supplying most of the film, which has been newly laser-scanned for this release. See the featurette **MOSTLY HAND-DRAWN** on Disc 3.



Douglas Adams appears in several guises throughout the animation. See if you can spot him...



Rod Lord filming some lettering, back-lit under the film rostrum camera.

MODELS & FX

The BBC Visual Effects Department had a long and proud history and their work on *The Hitchhiker's Guide* certainly ranks among their top achievements. Jim Francis was the Designer for the series with Mike Kelt and several other assistants. Zaphod's second head, Marvin, Slatibartfast's aircar and the model spacecraft - all came under their remit. Producer Alan J.W. Bell was only too keen to spend a large chunk of his budget on Jim's work and together they pioneered some new techniques.



Jim Francis, Zaphod's head and Mike Kelt (magazine cutting from *BBC Ariel*)



FX Assistant Mike Kelt was tall enough to hide behind Mark Wing-Davey and perform Zaphod's third arm.



The sunrise at the start of the series was achieved with this landscape model. (Photo courtesy of Mat Irvine)



Vagon ship on Blue Screen - Credit: Cliff Pinnock



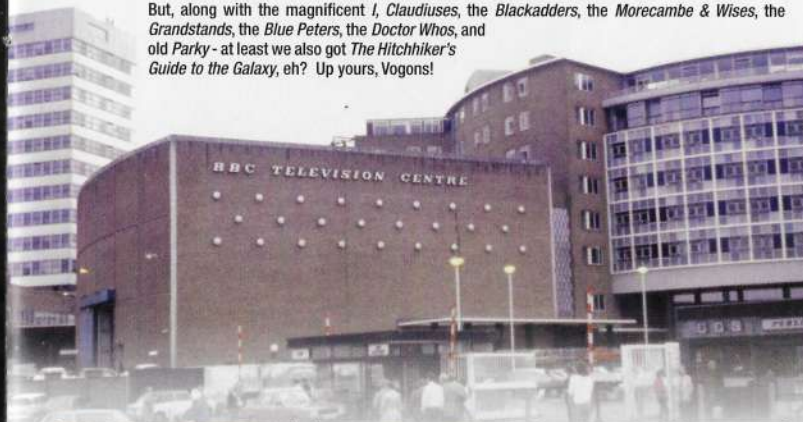
Cameraman Fred Hamilton lights the Vagon ship.

BBC TV CENTRE

Far back in the mists of ancient time, in the great and glorious days of yore, the airwaves were full of invention and largely well-funded, thanks to the government's licence fee. Those who toiled at the centre of that great circular hub, in the 'magic donut' - that hive of activity, that crucible of creativity - would know that they were all paramount experts in their fields. They felt secure and nurtured; the building serviced *all* their needs - yes, even the canteen! These were the golden years. Their Club overflowed...

How cruel then, that the decades of investment in buildings, infrastructure, technology, personnel and training - a wealth of expertise and experience - would soon be swept away by the Vogons.

But, along with the magnificent *I, Claudius*, the *Blackadders*, the *Morecambe & Wises*, the *Grandstands*, the *Blue Peters*, the *Doctor Whos*, and old *Parky* - at least we also got *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, eh? Up yours, Vogons!



David Dixon in his civvies, in the Canteen.



Simon Jones wore his dressing gown to the canteen.



Hitchhiker's first recording day was in TC1, the studio behind the *BBC Television Centre* sign, on 07 June 1980.



Jack May as Garkbit, the waiter

MILLIWAYS THE RESTAURANT AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE



Dave Prowse as Hotblack's bodyguard

"Milliways, the Restaurant at the end of the Universe" multi-level set took up most of TC1, the biggest studio at TV Centre and, at the time, the largest studio in Europe. Most of the day was spent on this set, with a delayed start, due to an overly zealous Health & Safety officer objecting to the lack of handrails. Some bits of scaffolding pipe and some four-by-two timber were hurriedly found and quickly painted black.



VOGONS, MAKE-UP AND COSTUME



Douglas Adams thought of the Vogons as the epitome of a *Doctor Who* monster, even down to the name. John Friedlander who, among other things, was responsible for designing Davros, sculpted the masks. Make-up artist Joan Stribling and Costume Designer Dee Robson came up with some nifty concept art and had the job of translating it into reality. Poor old Martin Benson as the Captain required their constant attention in studio, tucking in the neck, and wetting him down to look slimy. It didn't help matters that his winged seat was on the end of a seesaw affair, like a medieval ducking stool, which caused him a little seasickness.

Vagon Captain (Martin Benson)
Martin played the Prime Minister opposite Yul Brynner in *The King And I* (1956), and as Solo, was crushed by Goldfinger (1964).

"NOT ACTUALLY EVIL, BUT BAD-TEMPERED, BUREAUCRATIC, OFFICIOUS AND CALLOUS"

After the pilot recording in June, Benson returned to the role in November 1980, when he was joined by the guard (Michael Cule) in a frankly superior costume and mask. Michael sweated profusely in the more physical part, manhandling Ford and Arthur along the corridor and throwing them into the airlock. Alan J.W. Bell had worked with Benson before, but had spotted Cule in the *Rainbow Theatre* show of *Hitchhiker's* that summer, where he played 12 different parts on stage. Cule returned to play the Vagon Guard again, in the same costume, for *The Making of Hitchhiker's* documentary 12 years later.



Vagon Guard (Michael Cule)
Michael played the Vagon Captain at The Rainbow Theatre and later appeared in many other versions of *Hitchhiker's*.

SLARTIBARTFAST AND HIS AIRCAR



In the *Hitchhiker's Guide* novel, Zaphod arrives on Damogran in a speedboat, then travels up a cliff in a 20ft diameter glass bubble. This was probably Alan J.W. Bell's inspiration for the design of Slartibartfast's aircar, which was built by Jim Francis and his team. (Douglas Adams' original radio script was written well before the movie *Star Wars* had premiered anywhere, but Alan J.W. Bell was determined to avoid any hint of similarity to *Luke Skywalker's* aircar.) They purchased an expensive 6ft plexiglass hemisphere and a mould was taken to produce a cheaper, fibreglass lower half. Mounted on a gimbal, it turned on cue and the lid opened with hydraulics. The seats and trim were in scarlet corduroy.

On location in Cornwall, the bubble was first driven on the back of a truck through a tunnel, then set on rails in a quarry and finally hung from a huge crane on steel cables. The actors shrewdly declined to take a trip in the precarious looking rig, so Jim Francis and his assistant Stuart Murdoch doubled for them. The final use of the aircar on BBC television was in a heavily modified form on an edition of the programme *Jim'll Fix It*. The remains of the aircar are now preserved lovingly in the private hands of *Hitchhiker's* fan Dave Haddock.



The most unusual aspect of filming with the aircar was mounting it on a truck and driving it through the 0.6 of a mile-long, 106-year old Pinnock Tunnel on the private haul road between the villages of Par and Povey. Camera tracks were laid on the truck, plus the aircar was on a gimbal, so a lot of free movement was available. The tunnel strip lighting could never be turned off, for fear of blowing all the tubes, so sound effects were added to make a virtue of the unwanted reflections.

A high-contrast, black and white photograph with a reddish tint. It shows a close-up of a person's face, mostly in deep shadow. They are wearing a dark, textured hat, possibly a beret or a similar style. On the side of the hat, there is a small, bright, glowing red light source, which could be a small lamp or a reflective element. The person's features are partially visible in the highlights, showing a nose and cheek. The background is dark and indistinct.



Zaphod concept art by **Dee Robson** asked for "effect of 2 organs in his crotch"



Aubrey Morris, the Captain of the B-Ark was cold and damp even before he got into his bath, built out on a hillside in the Chew-Valley, Greater Manchester (which is nowhere near bloody London!) The bubble bath helped disguise the murky water delivered by tanker truck, from a nearby paper mill. Oh, the *glamour* of film-making!



The *Heart of Gold* model became a hanging miniature in the West Carclaze chalk quarry, where a mock up of the airlock was also erected. Arthur met Slarti at first in the quarry too, before flying away in his aircar 'bubble'. The weather took a turn for the worse, so poor Marvin was left standing with an umbrella and Slarti wore a plastic bag to keep his wig dry!



EALING STUDIOS



The BBC purchased the old home of Ealing Films in October 1955 and were based there for the next 40 years. *Film* culture always prevailed at Ealing, distinctly different to TV Centre, where everything was *electronic*. Agreements with unions ensured a certain percentage of all shows were made on film – usually the exteriors or anything involving time-consuming effects – and viewers became quite used to this convention in scripted programmes, such as comedies and drama.

For *Hitchhiker's* at Ealing in 1980, Pan Galactic Gargle Blasters were supped and a chimp was invited to a dinner party – ah, but *"This never happened"*. (Ah, but it did!). It was at Ealing Studios that a *real small furry creature* swung from the roof of the rocket cockpit and a rich merchant looked bored with his beautiful harem. The Newscaster told us all about Zaphod stealing the Heart of Gold, but Gag Halfbrunt reckoned Zaphod was just zis guy, you know?

The major item for Ealing was all the activity surrounding the impressive façade of the computer *Deep Thought*. Douglas Adams sat behind it, reading the lines and triggering its lights, for the other actors to react against. After editing, his voice was replaced by that of veteran Valentine Dyall, in a film dubbing suite, also there at Ealing.



HHGG CHRONOLOGY

- 1978/03 - Radio - First series of 6 weekly episodes on Radio 4
- 1978/12 - Radio - Christmas episode on Radio 4
- 1979/05 - Stage - at the ICA London - directed by Ken Campbell
- 1979/10 - Book - The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, paperback
- 1979/11 - Record - The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, LP Original Records, Double album, ORA42 - Mail Order only
- 1980/01 - Stage - Theatr Cymru, Welsh tour
- 1980/01 - Radio - Second Series - 5 consecutive nights on Radio 4
- 1980/02 - Book - The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, hardback
- 1980/05 - Stage - The Rainbow, London, directed by Ken Campbell
- 1980/05 - Record - HHGG LP released again, in shops this time
- 1980/07 - Screening of TV series Pilot at NFT2, London
- 1980/09 - Hitchhiker One, Glasgow convention with Douglas Adams
- 1980/10 - Book - The Restaurant at the End of the Universe, 2nd novel – Pan paperback
- 1980/11 - Record - Restaurant at the End of the Universe, ORA54
- 1981/01 - Record - The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy TV Theme Music single, Original Records, Single AB05
- 1981/01 - TV - Television Series, BBC2 (6 eps through 17 Feb)
- 1981/03 - Radio - USA: Series premier on National Public Radio
- 1981/06 - Record - Marvin/Metal Man, Depressive Discs/Polydor, POSP261
- 1981/08 - Convention - Slartibartdarg 81, Euston, London TV cast attend with Douglas Adams, Susan Sheridan
- 1981/10 - Book - USA: HHGG novel is published as paperback
- 1981/10 - Stage - Theatr Cymru UK tour, directed by J.P. Fetherbridge
- 1981/10 - Record - Reasons to be Miserable / Marvin I Love You, Depressive Discs/Polydor, Single POSP333
- 1981/10 - Talking Book (Abridged) HHGG on double cassette read by Stephen Moore
- 1982/08 - Book - Life, the Universe and Everything 3rd paperback
- 1982/12 - Convention - Z2's First, Million One, Aldershot
- 1983/04 - Talking Book (Abridged) - Restaurant at the End of the Universe – double cassette read by Stephen Moore
- 1983/05 - The Official HHGG Towel - by Beer Davies & Silicity
- 1984/10 - Game - Inform HH Adventure Game - on 5.25" floppy
- 1984/11 - Book - So Long and Thanks For All The Fish, 4th Pan hardback
- 1985/05 - Convention - Lazar Lyricon '85 in Birmingham - Mark W-D
- 1985/11 - Book - So Long & Thanks For All The Fish, 4th Pan paperback
- 1985/11 - Book - Original Radio Scripts, Pan paperback
- 1986/Late - Book - Young Zaphod Plays It Safe – a story in The Utterly Utterly Merry Comic Relief Christmas Book
- 1987/10 - Book - Don't Panic: The Official Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Companion, Titan paperback
- 1988/09 - CD/Cassette - The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Radio Series, BBC, CD 6001, Cassette ZBBC1035
- 1989/10 - Convention: Ericolton Six, Humour in SF, Gravesend
- 1990/01 - TV - The South Bank Show on Douglas Adams, with new scenes featuring Hitchhiker & Dirk Gently characters
- 1992/10 - Book - Mostly Harmless, 5th novel, Heinemann hardback
- 1993/03 - VHS - The Making of HHGG - Documentary by KJD with new scenes featuring HHGG characters
- 1993/10 - Convention: Z2's Vocen, Gravesend, with Dave Prowse
- 1993/10 - Book - Mostly Harmless, 5th Pan paperback
- 1993/?? - Comic - HHGG (in 3 issues) by DC Comics
- 1994/09 - Book - The Illustrated Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Weidenfeld & Nicolson (Orion) pub. in UK and USA
- 1998/06 - Convention - Lazar Lyricon II, Darlington
- 2001/05 - Death of Douglas Adams, aged 49
- 2001/08 - TV: Omnibus: The Man Who Blew Up The World, BBC2
- 2001/09 - Douglas Adams' Memorial Service is webcast live from St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London.
- 2002/05 - Book - The Salmon of Doubt, pub. 1 year after his death
- 2002/01 - DVD of 1981 BBC TV series + "Making of HH" docu
- 2004/09 - Radio - Third Radio Series (Tertiary Phase)
- 2005/04 - Film - Disney-backed Movie - World Premier, UK
- 2005/05 - Radio - Fourth Radio Series (Quintary Phase)
- 2005/06 - Radio - Fifth Radio Series (Quintessential Phase)
- 2005/07 - Book - Tertiary & Q-Phases Scripts by Dirk Maggs
- 2006/10 - DVD - 5.1 Surround Audio Book of Tertiary Phase Series
- 2008/03 - HH30 Live Show (Ep 2) at Royal Geographical Society
- 2009/10 - Convention - Hitchcon '09 - with HHGG Live Show with Harry Shearer and Andrew Sachs
- 2009/10 - Book (8th) - "And Another Thing..." by East Goller
- 2012/03 - Douglas Adams The Party: Virtual 60th, Apollo, London
- 2012/06 - HHGG Radio Show Live Tour 1, UK
- 2013/09 - HHGG Radio Show Live Tour 2, UK
- 2014/03 - Radio - Character Invasion - HHGG, LIVE from BH
- 2018/03 - Radio - Sixth Radio Series (Hexagonal Phase)
- 2018/04 - Downloads and CD of Hexagonal Phase
- 2018/06 - Record (Red Vinyl LP) of The Primary Phase Radio Series
- 2018/09 - Downloads and CD of Primary Phase and others
- 2018/10 - Blu-Ray and DVD of re-mastered TV series
- 2020/03 - Forty-Second anniversary of The Hitchhiker's Guide

THE MAKING OF THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE (1993)

This documentary (on Disc 2) was my writing/directing professional debut, thanks to producers David M. Jackson and Alan J.W. Bell. Looking back, I was extremely fortunate to have friendly enthusiasts and experts in every department. It was an amazing, educational and fulfilling opportunity and Douglas Adams gave it his seal of approval. Later that year he asked me to Art Direct *The Illustrated Hitchhiker's Guide*, a huge sliver book.

My privileged position as a regular team member, observer and documentarian of so many Hitchhiker's Guide projects over the last four decades culminates with this DVD and Blu-Ray release, for which I heartily thank Commissioning Editor Rebecca Richmond at the BBC. The accumulated archive extras and production notes on the discs, plus the images and text of this booklet contained in this 40th anniversary release, are something of a professional legacy.

My work here, is done..."

Improbability Archivist
Kevin Jon Davies
kjd42.wordpress.com

*Until 8th March 2020 of course - the 42nd anniversary!



Kevin Davies talking to Douglas Adams on the set of the pilot episode.



Animator Tony Clark played Marvin



Toon Babel Fish reacts to the Vogon!



Marvin made his first visit to Arthur's house location



Mike Cule returned as the Vogon Guard



The VHS sleeve from March 1993



This message was left for Kevin in 1980. Since Douglas' death in 2001 it has seemed very poignant

CONTENTS DISC 2 (OF 3)

THE MAKING OF HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY (1993) - 58m

Former animator Kevin Davies' retrospective documentary packed with unbroadcast and archive material, behind-the-scenes footage and interviews with the cast, Douglas Adams and Alan J.W. Bell. Reality blurs with fantasy, as Arthur Dent discovers his life is just a television series, which leads him to a final confrontation with a Vogon! Released on BBC VHS in March 1993, it won a Special Commendation at the VHE awards that year. In January 2002 it was included on the first DVD release of the TV series.

DON'T PANIC! (2002) - 25m

Colour Supplement to the Making of Hitchhiker's programme. It begins with a lengthy clip from *Startibartday* '81, a fan convention in London, followed by unused interview material shot for the main documentary.

COMMUNICATE! - 10m

BBC Education programme about writing comedy, was given access to the radio studios of Hitchhiker's during the production of the second series. Cast and crew were working at the legendary BBC Paris studio (which was in London), whilst Paddy Kingsland created the music at the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. Share and Enjoy!

BEHIND THE SCENES - 07m

Watch the final moments from the studio recording for Episode 2 on Saturday 08 November 1980 in studio TC1. Feel the tension mounting as the timecode counts down to the union-agreed cut-off time of 22:15:00.

PEBBLE MILL AT ONE (ALAN BELL AND ROD LORD) - 06m

An appearance by the producer and animation director together, on the early afternoon show (23 Jan 1981) from BBC Birmingham.

DELETED SCENE EPISODE 2 - 02m

Zaphod and Trillian in a short sequence cut from Episode Two.

TOMORROW'S WORLD SEQUENCE - 02m

Zaphod's second head was at the cutting edge of animatronics at the time, so the BBC's long-running science programme took a closer look, in this clip from the edition of 23 Jan 1981.

OUT-TAKES (BLOOPER REEL) - 09m

16mm film clips rescued from the editor's trim bins.

PETER JONES' INTRODUCTION - 08m

The pilot episode was screened to a selected audience of SF fans wearing headphones at the National Film Theatre Screen 2, to record a laughter track. This warm-up video was specially recorded by Voice of the Book, Peter Jones - his only on-screen appearance in his Hitchhiker's capacity. The laughter track idea was thankfully dropped by BBC bosses, after this one episode experiment.

TRAILERS - 02m

BBC 2 trailers and continuity.

FORMERLY EASTER EGGS FROM 2002 DVD:

EXPLOSION OF EARTH - 0m 44s

The unpurgated explosion, filmed at high speed, by looking up at a pyrotechnic.

UNUSED TITLES - 0m 38s

The first composited version of the title sequence borrowed obvious elements from the 1970s Doctor Who slit-scan tunnel effect. Alan J.W. Bell ordered a new tunnel for broadcast.

HEART OF GOLD - 03m

35mm widescreen animation sequences used for back-projection on the set.

CONTENTS DISC 3 (OF 3)

MOSTLY HAND-DRAWN (2018) – 31m

All of the *Hitchhiker's* series award-winning graphics have now been re-mastered from original film into one mesmerising sequence. Rod Lord's complex animation, enhanced by Paddy Kingsland's rich and delightful music with comedy legend Peter Jones' inimitable voiceover. Presented in mono, as per the original.

LIFE, THE UNIVERSE & CLAPPERBOARDS (2018) – 24m

Live-action excerpts, newly re-mastered from surviving archive reels. Most of the original film from the series no longer exists, purged as usual in the way of big broadcasters, who thought they needed the shelf space more. Luckily, the animators saved their reference work-prints and other random bits of film. These aren't always in the best of condition, but they do offer fascinating glimpses into the production process.

BONUS MATERIAL:

RECORDED AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE (2018) – 25m

Flashes of life on the studio floor at BBC Television Centre. The inventive cast and crew lurch between the mindless tedium and bursts of action. These were the usual dynamics of programme-making, in those analogue days of 1980. To be honest, very little has changed since.

WRITING HITCHHIKER'S (2018) – 15m

From archive video, three people who knew Douglas Adams very well, remember his battles to write the earliest episodes. His younger half-brother James recalls the old typewriter thundering through the fabric of the family home. *Radio Series Producer* Geoffrey Perkins and Douglas Adams' official biographer Nick Webb shed more light on his struggles. (Sadly, Perkins and Webb also died unexpectedly, way too young, as per their famous friend.)

TRAILER FOR RADIO TIMES (1980) – 1m

The only time the BBC's listings magazine ever granted Hitchhiker's the honour of a front cover, they also made this promo, with unique narration. Luckily, the producer kept this copy. (NB: Edited for music copyright reasons.)

OPEN DOOR: THE SOUND OF LOVE (DOUGLAS ADAMS, 1980) – 5m

A March 1980 edition of the public access programme. Young, unemployed Anthony Hodgins conducted the earliest known filmed interview with Douglas Adams, on the subject of his unhappy childhood. An audio extract from Hitchhiker's is illustrated with library footage, the earliest visual interpretation on TV.

DOUGLAS ADAMS ON NATIONWIDE (1980) – 3m

The first broadcast glimpse of the new Hitchhiker's TV series was during this Nationwide clip, when presenter Sue Cook interviewed "Richard, er, Douglas Adams."

MARVIN ON BLUE PETER (1981) – 3m

The Paranoid Android made his first bid for chart success with this whimsical appearance on the legendary BBC's flagship children's magazine show.

DOUGLAS ADAMS ON PAPERBACKS (1981) – 6m

A quaint book programme where Robert Kee discussed Douglas Adams' second novel with the author.

THE SOUND OF SYMPHER (1980) – 14m

The world of proto-digital audio production was examined here in this *highly technical* explanation of the BBC's newest dubbing suite, featuring the BAFTA-winning sound supervisor Mike McCarthy, at work on Hitchhiker's. Warning: May also contain beer barrels.

SATURDAY REVIEW (DOUGLAS ADAMS, 1985) – 9m

Douglas Adams explains to Minnette Marrin his ideas for interactive CD-Rom audio drama, whilst in Birmingham the fans gathered for a *Hitchhiker*-themed games convention. Features a spoof animated Guide entry on Douglas.

CONTENTS DISC 3 (OF 3)

DOUGLAS ADAMS ON MICRO LIVE (1985) – 5m

Douglas was interviewed about his fiendish new *Hitchhiker's Guide* computer game. The energetic presenter 'Frett' recalled in 2018 how Douglas had had a headache, yet after two good rehearsals, the segment was extended by 2 minutes.

SIMON JONES ON BBC BREAKFAST (2012) – 4m

Never heard of *International Towel Day*? Simon Jones explains, whilst also plugging the 2012 *Hitchhiker's Guide Radio Show Live!* UK tour.

TEN SHORT FILMS (2009): 29m

Made in 2009 for Penguin Books' launch event and website for the Eoin Colfer (6th Official) *Hitchhiker's* novel *And Another Thing...* These films about various aspects of *Hitchhiker's* were online for 2 years, in very low resolution, but have been up-scaled here. Douglas Adams features in archive footage from the early '80s.

(Sub-titles, per chapter jump...)

1. Towels
2. Radio Origins
3. ICA Stage Show
4. Rainbow Theatre
5. BBC TV Series
6. Guide Graphics
7. Promos & Porsches
8. The Movie
9. Premier Party
10. This Never Happened.

THE RADIO SERIES TRAILERS:

Recently made available again on newly packaged CDs, (and also for the first time, on shiny red vinyl!) the various 'Phases' of the radio series - adapted from the books in style by producer Dirk Maggs - are seen being recorded in these lengthy promos. (Originally made by Kevin Jon Davies for online use by Above The Title Ltd and BBC Radio 4, these have now been re-mastered, plugging the 2018 re-releases.)

TERTIARY PHASE TRAILER (2004) – 6m

The show made a triumphant return to its original medium on BBC Radio 4 in September 2004, with surviving cast members and some terrific guests, including Richard Griffiths as *Starlibartfast* and the recently deceased Douglas Adams himself, as *Agrajag!*

MARVIN AND ZEM (2004) – 5m

A look at how Stephen Moore recorded *Marvin* for *The Tertiary Phase*, with an annoyingly cheerful swap mattress called Zem. This was one of the video extras on the little-known 2006 DVD-Audio in 5.1 Surround of *The Tertiary Phase*.

Q PHASES TRAILER (2005) – 5m

A starry line-up for the Quinary and Quintessential Phases, made back-to-back in 2004. The episodes were broadcast in May/June 2005, just after the movie was released. For a long while, everyone thought *that was that*, and The Hitchhiker's Guide was neatly wrapped up and *finished...* But no!

HEXAGONAL PHASE TRAILER (2018) – 2m

Made by *Perfectly Normal Productions* for BBC Radio 4, adapted by Dirk Maggs from the Eoin Colfer book *And Another Thing...* plus some material newly discovered among Douglas Adams' papers. Once again, surviving cast members gathered at *The Soundhouse* in London, and welcomed some wonderful guest stars including Mitch Benn, Ed Byrne, John Lloyd and Sir Lenny Henry, with Jim Broadbent as Marvin.

ALL THESE AUDIO SERIES ARE AVAILABLE ON CD, DOWNLOADS, AND A NEW RANGE OF VINYL LPS.



CONTENTS DISC 1 (OF 3)



EPISODE 1

Arthur Dent escapes from the destruction of Earth with Ford Prefect



EPISODE 2

Suffering Vagon Poetry and improbably reunited with old friends



EPISODE 3

On the lost planet of Magrathea, Arthur Dent meets Slartibartfast



EPISODE 4

The story of Deep Thought and the Mice, plus a shoot-out with the cops



EPISODE 5

Dinner at Milliways - The Restaurant at the End of the Universe



EPISODE 6

The black ship, a bath, a game of Scrabble and The Answer (of sorts)

The entire series has been thoroughly re-mastered, with upgraded picture and audio. The original TV sound in dual mono, original stereo, a NEW stereo mix, and NEW 5.1 Surround Sound, all re-mastered in 2018 by Mark Ayres. English sub-titles are available as well as on-screen Production Notes with amusing and informative behind the scenes *inconsequivia* (inconsequential trivia) by animator and improbability archivist, Kevin Jon Davies.

THE HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

A SNIP AT 25 UMB KRON

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